

Content Core Vignette

Integrating Instruction

In grades K-2, instruction in literacy and numeracy should be central to all instruction. In grades 3-6, effective teaching and learning requires that students **use** their reading, writing, and math skills to acquire knowledge. Skills in science, arts, socials studies, and other curricular areas are equally important to the acquisition of knowledge. Learning can be maximized when instruction is engaging and developmentally appropriate. The Content Core Curriculum provides the framework to accomplish this objective statewide.

The Content Core Curriculum provides opportunities for students to **use** their language arts and math skills in engaging content-area activities; students are reading and computing to learn.

Students in third grade, for example, may write a story about the classroom aquarium and the snail that “slowly, slowly slithers up the glass” (spelling “snail” and “slowly” correctly every time). They may draw a picture of the snail and elodea and place it in the story they write. They might count the number of snails in the aquarium each week and make a bar graph to represent this data. The students may predict how many snails will be in the aquarium next month. They might describe in the story what a snail needs to live and the interaction between snails, plants, and fish in the aquarium. They may describe the communities in which they live and relate the aquarium communities to their own.

They may read a book on snails and go to the library and find on their own a book “Proper Care of an Aquarium”. The book will tell them how to identify snail eggs and they will observe the aquarium even more carefully and for the first time see the gelatin like mass of eggs. They may discover that the snails in the aquarium are related to red snails that live in the rivers of the rainforests of South America. When they present their story to the class, they may discover that there is a student from Brazil in their class and that he had red snails in his aquarium in Sao Paulo. When the students read the story to their fathers, they may ask, “Dad, do you know why plants are important to snails?”

Most third grade students know how to read. For their skill to advance, it is important that they become fascinated with learning. Learning science, history, art and more while using the skills of reading, writing, and mathematics allows students to increase their skills and knowledge more effectively.

There is no doubt that reading and math skills are critical for students, but the “engagement charm” lies in the curriculum areas of arts, science, health, and social studies.